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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 001329

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SUBJECT: NIGERIA: BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF MEMBERS OF THE
NEW CABINET PART 1

CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE DAWN M. LIBERI; REASON: 1.5 (B) and (D).

11. (C) On 18 July, President Obasanjo swore in 38 of 40 new Ministers and deputies and confirmed their various portfolios. In a novel twist, Obasanjo had forwarded the roster to the National Assembly without matching the prospective Ministers to any portfolios. He only designated the portfolios after the nominees had been confirmed. The Assembly approved all but one candidate, while Obasanjo removed another from consideration. Below are biographical sketches of 11 ministers. Bios on the remainder will be transmitted septel. Additionally, analysis of the selections and of the unorthodox nomination process will also be treated septel.

12. (C) Ministry of Internal Affairs - Minister, Dr. Iyorchia Ayu, was the former Minister of Industry (1999-2000), as well as a former Minister of Education (1993-1995). Ayu was elected Senator in 1992 and was the Senate President until November 1993 when impeached by pro-Interim National Government Senators led by Chuba Okadigbo (most recently Buhari,s ANPP running mate). He was a member of the now-defunct Social Democratic Party. Prior to his political roles, Ayu was a sociology professor for 24 years and an editor at the Daily Times of Nigeria for 2 years. Ayu is in his mid-fifties and was influential in the PDP,s victories in Benue State in the April elections. He is the nominee of PDP Chairman Audu Ogbeh and Benue State Governor David Akume. Minister of State Abubakar Tanko was the Director of Yankari National Park in Bauchi State, and is a longtime stalwart in the PDP in Niger State.

13. (C) Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Minister Olu Adeniji was Ambassador to France (1987), Switzerland (1977-1981) and Australia (1976-1977), UN Special Representative and Head of the UN Mission to Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), and Special Representative for the UN Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA). He has also served in the Nigerian Embassies in Washington, Freetown, Sierra Leone, and Accra. He was a career diplomat for 31 years, retiring in 1992 after serving as the Director-General of the MFA. He is 69. He is from Ogun State and has a close relationship with Obasanjo. Minister of State Saidu Balarabe Sambawa is a Hausa/Fulani from Kebbi who was a failed PDP candidate for Governor in the April elections. He is a former banker and farmer and is known as a grassroots politician in the state. He has raised cash and food crops, along with ostrich farming, and has worked in the banking industry for many years, rising to the post of Deputy Director of Inland Bank (where he is a major shareholder). He is in his forties.

14. (C) Ministry of Justice - Minister and Attorney General Chief Akinlolu Olujinmi is a practicing Senior Advocate of Nigeria (the highest professional ranking for an attorney) and is well known within the PDP of Oyo State. He is a Yoruba who has held no previous political office.

15. (C) Ministry of Information - Minister Chukweumeke Chikelu was a Representative from Anambra State in the National Assembly who was reelected in April. In the House he headed the Committee on Cooperation and Integration. He is an Igbo in his mid-thirties and his father was a Minister of Management Services under General Ibrahim Babangida,s regime.

16. (C) Ministry of Women and Youth Affairs - Minister Rita Akpan was the Secretary to Akwa-Ibom Governor Victor Attah. She is a single mother. Minister of State Princess Funke Adedoyin is the daughter of Kwara State business mogul Chief Samuel Adedoyin. She has held no office, but has very close personal ties to the Sarakis of Kwara State and Vice President Atiku. (NOTE: There are widespread rumors of an actual affair between Adedoyin and the Vice President. This nomination is compensation from Governor Bukola Saraki for not being chosen as his Deputy. END NOTE)

17. (C) Ministry of Defense - Minister Dr. Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso is the former governor of Kano who lost in April.

In his mid-forties, Kwankwaso,s experience is in water resources, having worked in the sector for 17 years. He started in politics as a State Representative in 1992, and was a delegate to the 1994-1995 Constitutional Conference. He was a member of the now-defunct Social Democratic Party. Following Abacha,s death, he joined the PDP and won the party,s nomination for governor over a former supervisor. Kwankwaso has no known background in military affairs but is regarded by President Obasanjo as a capable administrator who will help him control the Ministry. Obasanjo probably wanted to give this relatively young, strong political ally a prominent position so that he can remain in the public eye. Minister of State Dr. Rowland Oritsejafor, an Itsekiri, was the Deputy National Secretary of the PDP. He is a medical doctor and has close ties with Delta State Governor Ibori. Also with no background in military affairs, his nomination appears to be more a political than substantive consideration.

18. (C) Ministry of Intergovernmental and Special Duties - Minister Frank Nweke was Chief of Staff to Enugu Governor Dr. Nnamani. His father is a prominent businessman in the North. Nweke has a degree in Public Administration and at 34 is the youngest person in the cabinet. His nomination is solely on the recommendation of Governor Nnamani.

19. (C) Ministry of Cooperation and Integration - Minister Lawan Gana Guba was a Senator from Yobe State.

110. (C) Ministry of Police Affairs - Minister Broderick Bozimo, an Ijaw, was a lawyer and politician in Delta State. He and his wife are very close to Governor James Ibori and his wife was recently named Chief Judge of the state. He is a prominent Ijaw personality and his law firm is based in Warri.

111. (C) Ministry of the Federal Capital Territory - Minister Ahmad Nasir El-Rufai was the Secretary of the National Council on Privatization and the Director-General of the Bureau for Public Enterprises (BPE) from 1999 to 2003. El-Rufai is from Kaduna and is in his mid-forties. He attended Harvard Business School. He has worked in various fields in the private sector, mainly in surveying, and his first public sector experience was with a think tank in the Presidency, the Program Implementation Monitoring Committee (1998-1999). He is considered to be one of Nigeria,s ablest technocrats.

112. (C) Ministry of Sports - The new Minister is Colonel Musa Mohammed of Gombe State.

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